

Seattle Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 3:00pm – 5:00pm
Location: Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 6070
700 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Commissioners Present: Chair: Chris DeVore. Vice Chair: Jill Wakefield. Shaiza Damji, Christine Hanna, Rob Mohn, Julie Pham, Charissa Raynor, Chris Rivera. Commissioner representatives: George Allen (Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce), Randy Hodgins (University of Washington).

Mayor's Staff Present: Deputy Mayor Kate Joncas

Office of Economic Development Staff Present: Theresa Barreras, Kevin Burrell, Steve Johnson, Rebecca Lovell, Michael McVicker, Karl Stickel, Mikhael Williams, Nancy Yamamoto, Karin Zaugg-Black, and EDC Consultant Claudia Bach

Invited Guests: From BERK Consulting: Jeff Arango, Allegra Calder, and Melanie Mayock. From Seattle Colleges: Bruce Genung, Malcolm Grothe, and Victor Kuo. From the Seattle Department of Planning and Development: Steven Shain. From Seattle Jobs Initiative: Matt Helmer. From the University of Washington: Nevena Lalic and Kyle Schoenfeld

Meeting called to order at 3:05pm.

Welcome and Meeting Overview

- EDC Chair Chris DeVore welcomed commissioners and reiterated this year's meetings will generally feature work groups bringing their recommendations to the full Commission for direction, feedback, and authorization to proceed or take specific actions.
- Overview of the day's agenda: presentations followed by discussion for the built environment and social mobility work groups.
- Update regarding the Commission's recent action on sending a letter to City Council in support of the expansion of the U District business improvement area (BIA). On Friday, April 3, Council's Finance & Culture Committee modified the boundaries of the BIA and passed it out of Committee for a full Council vote on April 27th.

Discussion of Next Steps: Recommendations based on North Rainier Assessment

- Discussion led by Rob Mohn and Shaiza Damji, the two Commissioner leads for Work Group #2 focused on the built environment. BERK Consulting completed an assessment/report of the planning activities in the North Rainier Urban Village for the work group. Representatives from BERK attended the meeting to present an overview of their findings and recommendations.
- The work group sought consensus from Commissioners on three items:

- Endorse the recommendations contained in the BERK report (the report can be found [here](#)).
 - Empower the work group to take the detailed recommendations to the Mayor's Office, City Council, Seattle's Department of Planning and Development, and other relevant stakeholders in order to promote adoption of their recommendations.
 - Empower the work group to monitor and follow-up on initial conversations with the stakeholders identified above.
- The representatives from BERK presented their findings and recommendations. Presentation slides can be found [here](#) under the April 7th meeting header.
- Key items to note from discussion among Commissioners and BERK:
 - During their interviews for the report, BERK was surprised by the lack of controversy or pushback from City departments regarding possible improvements to the planning process. Representatives from City departments recognized a lack of focus on implementation.
 - Recognition that with new light rail stations being completed in the next few years, additional urban villages and neighborhoods will have access to additional resources and assets along the light rail line, especially major educational assets like Seattle Central College and the University of Washington.
 - Possible barriers preventing some of the report's recommendations from being implemented:
 - Plans not taking realistic market characteristics into consideration.
 - Political difficulties for the City of Seattle to prioritize an area for investment.
 - The City's challenges in making the significant investment necessary to properly address a major need. Often times, what could be a major, concentrated investment is diluted into smaller amounts and spread across the city. This barrier could be exacerbated by Council District elections.
 - The recommendations appear to be focused on how the City can better coordinate planning and implementation, not on the values associated with planning. It appears people both inside and outside of the City government recognize the need for better coordination and implementation.
- After discussion, the work group sought consensus on the three items identified above (Endorse the recommendations contained in the BERK report; Empower the work group to take the detailed recommendations to the Mayor's Office, City Council, Seattle's Department of Planning and Development, and other relevant stakeholders in order to promote adoption of their recommendations; Empower the work group to monitor and follow-up on initial conversations with the stakeholders identified above).
 - All Commissioners and Commissioner proxies in attendance agreed and supported the items for consideration.
 - OED will follow up by e-mail to confirm consensus and to follow up with Commissioners not present.
- OED will assist the work group to plan the appropriate approach in contacting City officials.

Discussion of Next Steps: The Seattle Grant-Postsecondary Education Financing Plan

- Nancy Yamamoto introduced the work group's members and topics for discussion. The work group first presented its progress to date in November 2014, and the purpose of this meeting's presentation was to update the Commissioners on new research and potential impact of additional funds to support Seattle students in postsecondary or adult education.
- Randy Hodgins, Nevena Lalic, Charissa Raynor, Jill Wakefield, and Nancy Yamamoto provided commentary for the presentation. Presentation slides can be found [here](#) under the April 7th meeting header.
- Following the presentation, Commissioners were invited to ask questions and provide feedback. The primary question posed to Commissioners was "What would make this a

compelling program to your constituents and those in your sectors?” The discussion that followed included the following:

- Work group is focused on how a grant helps students complete a degree or credential, not simply enrolling. Additionally, it should not just be about degree production, but rather, how does it help prepare residents for jobs and impact the economy.
- In continuing the research, Commissioners would like to know:
 - What could the grant mean for the skills gap in Seattle (i.e. many high-skill jobs go unfilled)?
 - How could the grant encourage or support internships and other job-ready training? How well can this ensure job readiness?
 - Is there a multiplier effect on future generations (i.e. fewer first generation students moving forward) that could be quantified or reported?
 - For current students at Seattle’s nine postsecondary institutions identified in the presentation, provide additional data on traditional college-age students versus adult learners including raw numbers and income levels.
- Other input or questions from Commissioners included:
 - Would the grant launch as a pilot program or other staged approach? Might it be focused on “more resilient” students?
 - Has there been any discussion with other public or private organizations, industries, or philanthropic entities that may be interested in partnering?
 - Want to ensure the grant is structured in a way so people do not move to Seattle solely to take advantage of the grant—should be some measure of longevity for qualification.
 - Appreciation for the evidence-based approach taken by the work group. Evidence-based solutions and recommendations will be critical to bringing others on board, responding to challenging questions, and moving the work forward.
- After the discussion, Commissioners reiterated their continued support of the work group’s mission and wanted to discuss more in depth at the next meeting.
- During the next meeting on June 3rd, the work group plans to present detailed recommendations on grant structure, impact, and possible pilot program models. Discussion will be focused on refining a framework and areas in which the work group can influence the public debate and/or have the most impact.

Present Annual Report & Seattle Economic Indicators

- Final drafts of the EDC’s 2015 Annual Report and Inaugural Seattle Economic Indicators were sent to Commissioners on April 7th. OED requested feedback by April 10th to ensure all critical edits or changes are made.
- Final versions of both documents and hyperlinks will be sent to Commissioners by the end of April.

Adjourned - Chair Chris DeVore adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.